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M631GENC
      UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
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      SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK
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     UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,
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                                             18 Cr. 762 (PAC)
                 V.
     NUNZIO GENTILLE,
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                    Defendant.
                                             Arraignment and
                                              Conference
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                                              New York, N.Y.
                                              June 3, 2022
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                                              2:15 p.m.
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      Before:
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                             HON. DENISE COTE,
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                                              District Judge
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                                APPEARANCES
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     DAMIAN WILLIAMS
          United States Attorney for the
          Southern District of New York
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     BY: AMANDA C. WEINGARTEN, ESQ.
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          MATTHEW J. KING, ESQ.
          Assistant United States Attorneys
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     FREEMAN NOOTER & GINSBERG
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          Attorneys for Defendant
     BY: THOMAS H. NOOTER, ESQ.
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     ALSO PRESENT: NOAH JOSEPH, U.S. Probation Officer, SDNY
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                     KRISTEN MAHARAJ, U.S. Probation Officer, EDNY
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(Case called)

THE DEPUTY CLERK: Is the government ready to proceed?

MS. WEINGARTEN: Yes. Good afternoon, your Honor.

Amanda Weingarten for the government. With me at counsel table is AUSA Matthew King, as well as E.D.N.Y. Probation Officer

Kristen Maharaj and SDNY Probation Officer Noah Joseph. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CLERK: For the defendant?

MR. NOOTER: Good afternoon, your Honor. I am Thomas Nooter. I'm CJA for the day. I'm here because I understand Mr. Gentille, who is here, may need appointment of CJA counsel. I have not had more than about a minute to speak with him. Frankly, it doesn't sound to me as if he qualifies for CJA counsel. But we don't have a financial affidavit or anything. So I don't know how the Court wants to proceed with that. He tells me he does have his own attorney who would be available next week but is upstate today. So I'm at the Court's disposal, but I don't know if we need to obtain a little more information before I'm actually appointed.

THE COURT: Thank you very much, Mr. Nooter. That's very helpful.

And do you have a copy of an appointment affidavit, Mr. Nooter, to review whether or not, in filling out the financial form, the defendant would qualify, or is it just based on your conversation with him?

MR. NOOTER: Just based on the conversation. I have not seen a CJA 23 form.

THE COURT: Okay. Thanks. Why don't you be seated for a moment.

This is a case in which the defendant was sentenced by Judge Nathan, and the case has since been reassigned to me. I have the report of May 27th from the probation department indicating that there are grounds—and six are listed—for violation of the terms of supervised release.

Let me ask you, Officer Maharaj, has the defendant been provided with a copy of the six specifications?

MS. MAHARAJ: No, your Honor.

THE COURT: Do you have a copy for him?

MS. WEINGARTEN: I have a spare copy, your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you. The government,

Ms. Weingarten, is providing a copy for the defendant.

Keep your mask on, Mr. Gentille.

And I should advise counsel that should you wish to address the Court without your mask, you may do so, but only from the podium.

So I'm happy to put this matter over to next Friday to let the defendant appear with retained counsel, counsel of his own choosing. That's just fine. Alternatively, if the defendant believes that he qualifies for appointment of counsel, Mr. Nooter can go over the financial affidavit with

him this afternoon, and if he qualifies, I'm happy to appoint Mr. Nooter to represent the defendant.

But let's take advantage of this time together to accomplish a few things and get this case organized. But again, Mr. Gentille, I'm happy to continue with this matter next week when you have counsel of your own choosing beside you, and able to consult with you.

You haven't been given a copy, Mr. Gentille, of the specifications of supervised release violations before this moment, so I'm just going to ask you to read them slowly to yourself. We're going to take a minute here so you can do that. And tell me when you're finished reading them.

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

(Pause)

THE COURT: I'm going to interrupt your reading,

Mr. Gentille, to tell you that I'm just going to enter a denial
on your behalf today. Right now I don't need you to respond
whether you admit or deny. I just need to make sure you have a
chance to read that. So let me continue giving you that
chance.

THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.

(Pause)

MS. WEINGARTEN: Your Honor, if I may. I just wanted to --

THE COURT: Excuse me. I want to make sure the

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defendant can hear anything you say.
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               (Mr. Nooter conferring with the defendant)
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               THE COURT: So Mr. Gentille, have you finished reading
      through the six specifications?
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               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.
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               THE COURT: Okay. Thank you. The government wanted
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      to say something before I allocute you.
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               MS. WEINGARTEN: Thank you, your Honor.
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               I just wanted to let the Court know that it was the
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      government's intention to seek remand today, and that may
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      affect the calculus for the defendant in terms of counsel, but
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      I wanted to give the defendant the opportunity to consider that
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      in this time.
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               THE COURT: Thank you.
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               MS. WEINGARTEN: Thank you.
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               THE COURT: So let me just ask you to stand,
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     Mr. Gentille.
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               Have you had an opportunity to read the six
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      specifications?
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               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.
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               THE COURT: Do you wish me to read them to you?
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               THE DEFENDANT: No, ma'am.
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               THE COURT: I'm going to enter a denial on your behalf
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      at this time. You may be seated.
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               THE DEFENDANT: Yes, ma'am.
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THE COURT: So Ms. Maharaj, could you review with me the drug testing history in recent months for the defendant.

MS. MAHARAJ: Yes, your Honor. In the --

THE COURT: Please stand.

MS. MAHARAJ: In the recent months, Mr. Gentille has not been tested. He was previously in drug treatment and had successfully completed that in 2021. There is no reason to believe that he has had any illicit substance use.

THE COURT: So when was the last time he was tested?

MS. MAHARAJ: I don't have that in front of me, your

Honor.

THE COURT: You don't normally test people on supervision?

MS. MAHARAJ: We randomly do test people, especially if they are in drug treatment. If we have reason to believe that they're using illicit substances, we would test them. We didn't have any reason to believe that he was.

THE COURT: Okay. I'm a little surprised. This defendant is, or was at the time of his sentence, criminal history category V, drug conviction, had been in drug treatment. I'm a little surprised there isn't a random drug testing protocol that follows automatically whatever schedule that may be on. But that's a separate issue.

I have a report of May 27th from the probation department to support the specifications that have been filed.

Is there anything additional that you wanted to bring to my attention, Ms. Maharaj?

MS. MAHARAJ: There's nothing additional, your Honor.

THE COURT: I'll hear from the government. Yes, Ms. Weingarten.

MS. WEINGARTEN: Your Honor, if I may.

MS. WEINGARTEN: Thank you, your Honor.

In addition to the specifications that you have in the violation report, your Honor, there has also been a statement by a witness to an officer that there is a firearm, that this witness saw a firearm in the apartment of the defendant's. For safety reasons, I would like to respectfully refrain from listing that witness's name. But I thought that would be important for the Court to know, given that during that time period, other witnesses came forward stating that the defendant had threatened to shoot up the Secure Self Storage establishment and to cause other types of harm to various witnesses. So the government believes that that's an important factor, your Honor, that should be brought to the Court's attention.

THE COURT: So do you have an application, Ms. Weingarten?

MS. WEINGARTEN: Yes, your Honor. For remand. May I continue with that?

THE COURT: Yes.

MS. WEINGARTEN: So, your Honor, the government views
Mr. Gentille's recent arrests as truly disturbing and that they
demonstrate an escalating pattern of harassment against women,
and including a woman with whom he was romantically involved,
and we believe that --

THE COURT: Excuse me one second.

MS. WEINGARTEN: And the government believes that
Mr. Gentille has demonstrated that he is a danger to his
community. There were at least four complainants related to
these two arrests from March and April of 2022 that form the
basis of the specifications. Each of these complainants claim
that Mr. Gentille threatened them and made other menacing
statements. Some of those threats included a statement, "I'm
going to blow your face off and shoot up the place," another
statement, "I'm going to burn this place down and fuck you up,"
another statement, "I will catch you on the street," and the
manager at this Self Secure company said that Mr. Gentille
actually did show up to the establishment, causing that manager
to fear for her life.

About a month later, the defendant got into a series of verbal disputes with a romantic partner. He extorted her by saying that he would expose nude photographs of her to family and friends if she didn't make weekly payments to him. He said, "Just Google me. You'll see the violent crimes that I have done in the past and you'll see what I'm capable of." He

also stole her phone, her car keys, and he pounded so hard on her window that it caused -- causing it to crack. He said, "I'm going to hurt you. Don't leave your home."

The government also notes that Mr. Gentille has a youthful offender conviction for misdemeanor assault, there was a prior protective order filed against him in 2012, and that there is another conviction for attempted petit larceny where he actually broke into a car, among other convictions.

So, your Honor, with regard to risk of flight, the probation officer has made several attempts to visit with Mr. Gentille at the address in Brooklyn that he provided, but it seems that there's uncertainty as to whether he actually lives in the address that he provided to the probation officer. Mr. Gentille has told probation that he is now living in a hotel and is seeking to move to another location, but has not provided the probation officer with that address or the phone number of his romantic partner in order to contact him. However, we feel that it is the danger to the community that is the strongest and most compelling factor for remand. Thank you, your Honor.

THE COURT: So Mr. Nooter, I understand you're uncertain about your status with respect to representing the defendant. I'm going to appoint you because of the application that's just been made to me now, and again, if the defendant has the funds to retain counsel or has counsel, other counsel

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to represent him, I'm happy to have another conference next week for that counsel to appear and be heard. But in the meantime, I don't want the defendant to be without counsel, so I'm appointing you today.

MR. NOOTER: Sure.

THE COURT: Would you like an opportunity to discuss these issues with your client, Mr. Nooter, before you respond to the government's application?

MR. NOOTER: I would, your Honor.

THE COURT: Great. Just let me deputy know when you're ready to resume. I'm going to ask you to stay in the courtroom with your client.

MR. NOOTER: Yes.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. NOOTER: Thank you.

THE DEPUTY CLERK: All rise.

(Recess)

(In open court)

THE COURT: Please be seated.

Mr. Nooter, did you have a chance to consult with your client?

MR. NOOTER: Yes, I did, your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you. And so you've heard the government seeks a remand. Do you wish to be heard on that issue?

MR. NOOTER: I do.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. NOOTER: Your Honor, first of all, I will also say I did speak to the lawyer that my client told me about.

Although I didn't know him personally, it turns out I do know his partners, one of whom is Jeremy Schneider, who I think you may know.

THE COURT: Yes.

MR. NOOTER: He's been representing him in the state court cases, which arise out of these complaints, the complaints that are the specifications, the ones that resulted in arrest, the pending state court cases. There are two of them.

THE COURT: Can he get here this afternoon?

MR. NOOTER: No. I didn't actually go over that with him. But I understand he's not in the city.

One of those has been adjourned till June 16th in Queens criminal court, and the other one has been adjourned to mid-July. He didn't remember the exact date. In both cases, they've been -- I don't know if your Honor knows or remembers anything about state court, but there's a thing that's called marking a case final against the People. It's final against the People in both cases, meaning the case will be dismissed the next time unless they obtain a corroborating affidavit. The complaint is a hearsay complaint, and in order to go

forward, to turn it into an information, they need a corroborating affidavit, and the People have not been able to obtain that so far. Now they may, of course, before those dates.

Both he and my client -- of course the lawyer's information comes from my client, basically, but -- confirm, state that there are a number of things about these disputes that are very different from the way it appears in the charges. My client is the owner of an automobile detailing and car washing business, which is why I thought he may not actually qualify for CJA counsel, but he's the owner of that business. And he's always there during working hours. So even though he's been a little bit itinerant—and I'll explain why in a minute—in terms of where he's living, he's always at his business, and that's where the probation officer apparently has always been able to find him if they couldn't find him for any other reason.

But the reason he's been a little itinerant is that he has been living and still considers his residence 244 Nassau Avenue in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, with his girlfriend Jennifer, who is not one of the complainants that has been discussed. But Jennifer's mother just passed away, and apparently Jennifer is very upset, and that has led to my client sometimes staying in a hotel, not moving permanently to some hotel but sometimes he doesn't stay nights there so he'll stay in a hotel, which is

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what he did tell his probation officer. But the business is an anchor, obviously; it's a place to find him. He's not going to run away from his business, give up that asset, in effect, in order to avoid coming back to court, which is all this really should be about, is he going to come back to court.

He's confident -- he's told me more about what these disputes are about. One had to do with a storage facility where he had some things stored. He got into a dispute with the owner of that, when his dog apparently urinated in the storage facility, and so there was a fight over that a little bit. And then the other three complainants, as -- as far as I can identify, are people who were hired to work for him at the car wash, who then he felt were stealing and so he fired them. So that's resulted in the dispute that has resulted in these various claims. He denies some of the individual facts, like that any window of a car was broken. I mean, all of these things we can't really litigate right here, but he does -- he presents to me reasonable denials of what some of these charges are, which, coupled with the fact that the complainants have not come in to the prosecutor's office to sign the corroborating affidavit and having the criminal charges, which are all misdemeanors, dismissed on the next court date, make me believe that there's certainly two sides to this story. other lawyer mentioned that he had been offered a plea to a violation, which is not a crime, with an idea that he would

have an anger management program or something, and they turned that down. But it could be that somewhere in Mr. Gentille's future, some kind of anger management might be appropriate.

But on a lot of the specifics that these complaints refer to, he either denies that they're correct or he has a different explanation for what they are, which is not consistent with being guilty of the criminal charges.

Finally, I've never seen anything from the government that suggests he hasn't shown up in court when he was supposed to. He was a little late today, but as this Court may know, there's a protest going on outside in front, and he had come by car with a friend and he had some trouble getting up to the courtroom right on time, but he was only 15 minutes late.

I would also say that, well, he's very, very concerned about how the business is going to continue to run and who's going to take care of his dog and things like that if he ends up being remanded today. And I would just say that in terms of the only thing that really is important here, which is whether he's going to come back to court, that there's almost -- it's almost a certainty, you know, unless he's going to throw away this whole business that he's built up over years that he is the owner of.

THE COURT: So Mr. Nooter, I'm not really focusing on the failure to appear, I'm focusing on the danger issue, that there's a report that he has a firearm or that specifically I

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think a firearm was seen in his residence. And --

MR. NOOTER: Why wouldn't he have been charged with Why wouldn't the police have come and exercised a search I mean, there are -- he's obviously got some disputes going on with these ladies, and they may be heated, but they also seem to have resulted in exaggerated set of feelings. He doesn't have any kind of -- well, I can't say whether there's an order of protection in the state case. There might have been one issued. But if there were such a thing, one would think that that would have been followed up on immediately by law enforcement. It just seems that it's likely that it's one of these things that people are trying to make things difficult for each other because they're mad at each other and that if there -- since I expect a short adjournment, I mean, I would perhaps suggest shorter than next Friday, but a short adjournment to see if we can get the thing actually totally resolved --

THE COURT: So Mr. Nooter, this case may go forward whether or not the state charges are dismissed.

MR. NOOTER: Of course. We've had that experience together.

THE COURT: Yes. Yes. The government may pursue violations of supervised release even if state charges are dismissed.

MR. NOOTER: Right. But it seems --

THE COURT: So we have a situation here where there are independent claims—that is, people who don't know each other—each describing threatening behavior by the defendant—out of control, threatening, frightening behavior. We have a report here of a witness seeing a gun, which the defendant has access to. I have a probation department that has not been able to confirm residence, either the apartment he stayed in —they've never been given access to that, they have no way of contacting the woman who he asserts he's living with, I guess Jennifer. They have no phone number for her that works. They're not given access to the apartment. They don't know where this hotel room is.

So the only thing probation knows is that last year he finished a drug treatment program successfully; and two, he has a car wash business—which is good, that's terrific—that they have seen. They're not able to confirm residence. And I have these disparate, independent reports of threats.

MR. NOOTER: Your Honor, I haven't quite heard that they weren't able to confirm residence in the past. That may have been -- you may be correct. It's not what I had heard from the --

THE COURT: Well, let me make sure I understood correctly from the probation department, whom I've just met.

Ms. Maharaj, have you been able to enter the defendant's residence at any point and confirm that's where he lives?

MS. MAHARAJ: No, your Honor. Prior to the past
month, Mr. Gentille was under our low-risk offenders so we
weren't required to conduct a home visit. I did attempt a home
visit a few weeks ago, and I was not able to confirm that he
resides there, as well as I did ask to speak with his
girlfriend who does reside at that address in Brooklyn, and
Mr. Gentille has not been able to give me her phone number and
stated that she was having issues with law enforcement coming
to her home. So the probation department has not confirmed
that Mr. Gentille resides in Brooklyn. He did inform me
yesterday that he's been staying at a hotel in Queens, which he
did provide me the address of. I did not get the room number
for him. But he stated that he would be leaving there and
securing an apartment, I believe he said today, on Queens
Boulevard.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MS. MAHARAJ: You're welcome.

THE COURT: Mr. Nooter, just to bring you up to speed there on the residence issues.

MR. NOOTER: Right. So I do think's a little bit different than the way the Court had summarized it.

THE COURT: In what way? I'm sorry. I didn't mean to mislead you.

MR. NOOTER: Only insofar as I assumed that the probation officer did speak to his girlfriend. Am I correct or

am I not?

THE COURT: No. She did not.

MR. NOOTER: But did find the residence of the girlfriend.

THE COURT: Was not permitted to enter, has not spoken with the girlfriend, and has not inspected the residence.

MR. NOOTER: All right. But one final point my client made, by the way, is that he self-surrendered when he was informed that they wanted him to, you know, that they had — that they wanted to arrest him on these misdemeanors charges. But I suggest that, again, the risk of losing the business, which is a place where he can be found, is something that would be such a motivating factor, that that, along with the Court's admonitions, would keep him from doing anything in the interim that would be harmful to any other person. And in addition, the fact that these cases have been pending since I believe it was April without any suggestion that there was any harm to anybody since, in that interim period, and certainly without any suggestion that he failed to appear, that he can be relied on to come back to court in order to dispute these charges, which he very vehemently disputes.

THE COURT: So again, I'm not relying on the failure to appear. I'm relying on the danger to the community, from access to a firearm, and from threats as described in the probation department report, to independent people who don't

know each other.

 $\ensuremath{\mathsf{MR.}}$ NOOTER: I mean, the access to firearms is awfully vague.

THE COURT: Well, it's not a vague assertion of a firearm being seen in an apartment in which he lives.

Let me make sure I got that right, Ms. Weingarten.

MS. WEINGARTEN: Yes, that's the government's understanding, your Honor, is that a witness observed the firearm in the apartment in which the defendant resides.

MR. NOOTER: And again, you know, I would just repeat that if that were the case, why didn't the witness tell the police or tell the prosecutors, assuming the witness is one of the complainants who already is a complainant in the cases that are pending in Queens criminal court, so that something could be done about it? It just seems a very vague basis at this point for holding him in jail.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Nooter.

Ms. Weingarten, you wanted to respond?

MS. WEINGARTEN: Yes, your Honor. And just to be clear, to clarify the record, and as I mentioned earlier, I'm not at liberty to disclose who the witness was, but that witness did make that statement to a law enforcement officer.

Your Honor, just to clarify also, the next court date below is on July 15th, for the benefit of Mr. Nooter. He didn't have that date. I spoke with the ADA on those two

cases. Again, the next two dates are June 16th and July 15th.

The ADA had told me that she did make an offer that was rejected, and she intends to pursue those cases in state court. So, you know, those cases are continuing.

Your Honor, just to clarify what the defense attorney described as disputes with these ladies, these are multiple — there are at least four individuals that we know of who have made these complaints, two of which were female, at least, others were employees of the self-storage facility. In addition to making threats to blow the place up, burn the place down, he also made individual threats to — I'll use the word "mess up" certain individuals and to go out and catch them on the street, don't leave your home, I'll find you, you know, and that coupled with access to firearms, the government believes that the defendant has demonstrated to be a danger to the community.

This is not the first time that there's been behavior like this. As I mentioned, there were previous violations to property and assault charges, in addition to a protective order.

So unless the Court has any additional questions, that will be all. Thank you.

MR. NOOTER: If I could have a moment, your Honor. My client wants to tell me something, which he's writing.

(Pause)

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MR. NOOTER: I think the point my client wanted to make to me, one of them was that at least one of these complainants lives just down the street from him, and from the time when they had whatever dispute that resulted in the complaint being filed and the arrest being made in early April, he has not had any contact with her or done anything in any kind of threatening manner. Other than that, I think I would rest my argument.

THE COURT: Thank you.

So let me see if I have the sequence of events right.

To make sure I do, Officer Maharaj, in Specification No. 1, you indicate that on March 15th, you received notification that the defendant had been arrested on March 14th. How did you receive that notification?

MS. MAHARAJ: Sorry. Can you say that again, your Honor.

THE COURT: Looking at Specification No. 1 --

MR. METZLER: Yes.

THE COURT: -- you write that on March 15th, you received notification that the defendant had been arrested on March 14th.

MS. MAHARAJ: That's correct, your Honor.

THE COURT: How did you get that notification?

MS. MAHARAJ: We receive arrest notifications through our administrative assistants that get reports from a database

stating that our defendants have been arrested.

THE COURT: So the defendant didn't tell you.

MS. MAHARAJ: For that one, he did report the arrest after he was arraigned in court and released.

THE COURT: So he initiated a report to you within 72 hours?

MS. MAHARAJ: Yes, that's correct.

THE COURT: Okay. So then he was arrested on March 14th and advised you within 72 hours of that arrest, and that arrest had to do with the complaint made by a person who manages the Secure Self Storage.

MS. MAHARAJ: Yes, your Honor.

THE COURT: And then there were incidents on April 3rd and April 9th with respect to another woman, and an arrest report was issued on April 4th. I'm not quite sure when the defendant was arrested with respect to the second set of charges.

MS. MAHARAJ: Mr. Gentille was arrested on April 12th.

MR. NOOTER: I'm sorry, your Honor. That was one of the self-surrenders. He had been notified to come in, and they gave him a week or something to do so.

THE COURT: So he was arrested on April 12th, and he did not notify the probation officer within 72 hours of that arrest, but the probation officer learned of the arrest and contacted the defendant on April 20th. Do I read that right,

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Ms. Maharaj?

MS. MAHARAJ: Yes, that's correct, your Honor.

THE COURT: So I have a situation here of multiple incidents that are unrelated to each other in a short period of time, each of them resulting in an arrest, the second one where the defendant does not alert the probation department to the arrest; the probation department is unable to get access to the residence or what it's been told is the residence or contact information for the woman who owns or leases that apartment. So I have a story here of a probation office that is unable to adequately supervise and inform itself of what is happening with respect to the defendant; I have a defendant who is placing women in separate instances so in fear of what may happen to them that they go to the police and report it. So I am going to remand the defendant. And I'll put this matter over till next week so either you, Mr. Nooter, after you have a chance to further explore these issues, or his other counsel can be heard.

THE DEPUTY CLERK: Friday, June 10th, at 3 p.m.

MS. WEINGARTEN: That works for the government.

MR. NOOTER: I'm sorry. If I can just check my calendar.

(Defendant conferring with Mr. Nooter)

MR. NOOTER: Yes, I'm available then if his other counsel doesn't appear.

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THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Nooter.
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                Thank you, all.
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                THE DEPUTY CLERK: All rise.
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